

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1596

As Reported By House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to modified student attendance calendar grants.

Brief Description: Authorizing funds for developing and implementing a modified student calendar.

Sponsors: Representatives Karahalios, Brough, Dorn, Holm, Peery, Brumsickle and J. Kohl; by request of Board of Education.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Education, March 2, 1993, DP.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Dorn, Chair; Brough, Ranking Minority Member; Brumsickle; G. Cole; Eide; G. Fisher; Holm; Karahalios; J. Kohl; Patterson; Pruitt; and Roland.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Cothorn, Vice Chair; Thomas, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Carlson; Hansen; Jones; Stevens; and Vance.

Staff: Shirley Leckman (786-7291).

Background: Studies have shown that children lose ground academically over the three month summer break. Consequently, review is necessary at the beginning of each school year. Suggestions for keeping students in a more continuous learning mode include a schedule that spreads vacation breaks throughout the year, and/or increases the length of the school year for some or all students. A longer school year would provide opportunities for remediation for some students, and enhancement or acceleration for others. Double-shifting and multi-tracking, other methods of modifying student attendance calendars, include the added benefit of maximizing building utilization.

Summary of Bill: The State Board of Education is permitted to award grants to selected school districts to develop and implement modified student attendance calendars. These programs will be evaluated and serve as models for other districts. A maximum of 12 schools or districts will be selected, with consideration given to program design, to reflect a balance among all grade levels, school characteristics and sizes, and geographical areas.

This act is to expire June 30, 1997.

Fiscal Note: Requested February 24, 1993.

Appropriation: The sum of \$500,000 from the general fund to the State Board of Education.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: There is a need to shift from the agrarian calendar to a more contemporary model. These small grants will create models and expedite the process. Also, a shorter break/vacation period will better prepare students for the school-to-work transition where, in the workplace, employees start out with only two weeks vacation per year. Several schools are already working on a modified school calendar.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Representative Karahalios, sponsor; Linda Byrnes and Candy Curl, Washington State Board of Education; Bunker Frank, Yakima School Board; and Sherrelle Walker, Federal Way School District.